DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 248 640 EC 170 418

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TITLE Generic Affective Competencies: A Model for Teaching Socially and Emotionally Disturbed Adolescents.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Education, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 83
NOTE 13p.; Portions of this paper were presented at the Regional Conference on Emotional Disturbance (Austin, TX, February 6, 1981); and the Minnesota Conference on Programming for the Developmental Needs of Adolescents with Behavioral Disorders (Minneapolis, MN, Fall, 1982). Contained in EC 170 401.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Classroom Environment; *Classroom Techniques; *Emotional Disturbances; Secondary Education; Teacher Role; *Teaching Skills

ABSTRACT

Described in this report are a set of interrelated teaching competencies addressed towards affective-domain behaviors. These 41 competencies are intended for both special and regular classroom teachers, with special importance for teachers of socially and emotionally disturbed adolescents. The competencies relate to three major areas: (1) creating an affective climate (using accepting rather than rejecting language, involving students in creating limits and learning activities); (2) managing conflicts and crises in the classroom (accepting and recognizing feelings accurately, communicating confidence in the student's ability to learn and grow); and (3) using positive classroom management practices (depersonalizing roles, using humor to decontaminate stressful situations). (Author/CL)

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Generic Affective Competencies: A Model for Teaching Socially and Emotionally Disturbed Adolescents

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Paul Pattavina

ABSTRACT

Secondary level students who exhibit social or emotional adjustment difficulties, or affective disturbance, can prove taxing and problematic for teachers in both special and regular class settings. As a result, teachers need a range of competencies for managing the learning and behavior of students characterized by affective needs. Described in this report are a set of interrelated teaching competencies addressed towards affective-domain behaviors. Thus, the focus of the present report encompasses generic affective competencies. These are purported to be a common bond between special and regular classroom teachers, and of special importance for teachers of socially and emotionally disturbed adolescents.

Any number of different social or emotional adjustment difficulties may prevent students from achieving their full educational potential. A student's feelings, beliefs, and behaviors are critical variables in the learning process.

Youngsters characterized by any of the classifications of learning handicaps (TEA, 1979) are especially vulnerable to situations and experiences that precipitate social and emotional conflicts and that inhibit learning. The more frequently, chronically, and intensely (Pattavina & Gotts, 1979) a youngster's affective-functioning conflicts with learning, the more likely it is that a youngster will subsequently become further characterized by academic retardation, limited intellectual development, and inadequately prepared for adult adjustment (Bruner, 1971; Gallagher & Harris, 1976; Morse, 1977, 1979; Robins, 1966; Schafer & Polk, 1967).

Preparing individuals to manage adolescents who exhibit serious social and emotional adjustment difficulties remains an issue of concern for teacher trainers. With the current prospect of more handicapped students being integrated into regular classrooms, it seems likely that secondary level educators will need to be making instructional and management decisions about a

EC170418

Portions of this paper were presented at the Regional Conference on Emotional Disturbance, Austin, 2/5/81; and the National Conference on Programming for the Developmental Needs of Adolescents with Behavior Disorders, Minneapolis, 9/82.

Research presented herein was supported partially by a grant from the U.S. Office of Education. However, no official endorsement should be inferred.

more diversified, or heterogenous, population of adolescents.

To the question, "What are the competencies required to work with children who are mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, or visually handicapped?", for a long period, the response from the field of special education was categorical in nature, as evidenced in teacher training and state licensing arrangements, as well as the ways that services were made available to children in public school.

The issue of generic competencies has come to the foreground as varieties of appropriate instructional arrangements have emerged in accordance with federal and state regulations and policies. When resource and helping teacher arrangements became used in lieu of self-contained and categorically homogenous classes, teachers were expected to function cross-categorically to meet the needs of children with a variety of diagnoses. The current emphasis on least restrictive environment has moved a similar responsibility partially back into the mainstream and to the regular classroom teacher (Gotts, Pattavina, Goodman, & Rodriquez, 1978).

Described in this report are a set of teaching competencies addressed towards a student's affective domain behaviors, and the focus encompasses "generic affective competencies" (GAC) which appear to be a common bond between special and regular classroom teachers, and of special importance for teachers of socially and emotionally disturbed adolescents.

Generic Affective Competencies: A Common Bond

Generic affective competencies (Gotts et al., 1978; Pattavina, 1981; Pattavina & Ramirez, 1980) are interrelated teaching skills that seem important for educating secondary-aged youths who experience social or emotional adjustment difficulties. Three broad categories of affective teaching behaviors identified in the model are those required by any effective teacher who attempts to motivate, understand, involve, manage, and teach individuals who are vulnerable and problematic in educational settings. These are (a) establishing the affective climate of the class, (b) managing conflicts and crises, and (c) using positive classroom management practices.

The GAC model identifies how teachers can systematically attend to the needs of socially/emotionally disordered students through management, instructional, and relationship-oriented practices. Classroom teachers are understood in this regard to potentially impact the perception, felings, thinking patterns, and behavioral habits of vulnerable and problematic adolescents. The model proposes, in general, that learning opportunities with such youths are fostered continuously through interactions and relationships that generate effective disposition, communication, and reward (Morse, 1979; Thomas, 1978).

The specific GACs described in the following chart are those skills, knowledges, and attitudes which have seemed important for a teacher's successful dealing with affective domain behaviors of secondary level exceptional students. It may be that there is considerable commonality of these competencies with those required by any teacher to work effectively with the affective behaviors of secondary level students in general (Pattavina & Ramirez, 1980).

Generic Affective Competency Statements (n=41)

I. Creating Affective Climate

1. Use accepting rather than rejecting language
2. Focus on feelings and reflect them accurately

3. Plan for success by gearing expectations and activities to each student's level of achievement
4. Make use of students' interests to enhance the meaningfulness of activities
5. Involve students in creating limits and learning activities
6. Give clear, simple instructions, one at a time
7. Initiate contact with resistive students
8. Recognize and acknowledge student efforts
9. Give a student corrections without criticism

II. Managing Conflicts and Crises and the Classroom

10. Accept and recognize feelings accurately
11. Leave responsibility for resolution with the student
12. Communicate confidence in the student's ability to learn and grow
13. Invite, but do not force, communication with a student
14. Maintain a goal-oriented, problem-solving approach to conflict
15. Use or exploit conflict as an opportunity for student growth
16. Use I messages to convey feelings
17. Control personal impulses in order to choose a response which will deescalate the conflict
18. Disengage from arguments to avoid power struggles
19. Recognize areas of least effectiveness regarding the management of student conflicts
20. Model effective alternatives for students to cope with conflict
21. Admit mistakes to students
22. Convey calm confidence during conflict and do not blame
23. Establish contact with a student after conflict with them

III. Using Positive Classroom Management Practices

24. Structure the environment and activities to facilitate group learning
25. Use questions rather than statements to remind students of limits
26. Depersonalize rules
27. Monitor several activities simultaneously
28. Be enthusiastic regarding activities
29. Selectively ignore behaviors that are not overly disruptive
30. Offer alternatives rather than commands
31. Remind students of previous successes
32. Use humor to decontaminate stressful situations
33. Control behavior through proximity and nonverbal feedback
34. Avoid punitive, rejecting, and absolute responses
35. State expectations clearly and briefly
36. Give disciplinarian feedback to students in private to avoid a ripple effect
37. Enlist problem-solving rather than "pledges of good conduct"
38. Allow students to search for alternative to punishment
39. Reinterpret adult limits as protections
40. Leave responsibility for change with the student
41. Allow students to experience natural and logical consequences of behavior

These competency statements are the result of theoretical considerations reported in the professional literature, direct observation, and consensual validation surveys. Subsequent research activities being conducted or

designed need to ultimately achieve an empirical validation of the competencies over a period of time.

Establishing Climate, Trust and Rapport

The climate of an instructional setting or classroom is best understood as a complex of variables surrounding relationships and interpersonal behavior. Such considerations have seemed especially important in the process of educating socially and emotionally problematic youths, given their proneness towards such things as self-doubt, poor self-concept, failure, conflict (Morse, 1977). Consequently, the manner in which teachers are able to generate adaptive feelings and behaviors among such students seems to be an issue of preemptive importance (Pattavina, 1973).

Competencies identified in the GAC model relative to climate, trust, and rapport focus upon three general concerns. These include (a) relationships and interactions, (b) self-cocept and self-esteem, and (c) motivation and reward. Several lines of support for these ideas found in the literature are presented in the following section.

Brendtro (1980) suggested that teacher-student relationships are important in the instructional process because they improve the chances for effective communication and learning, as well as improve the value of teacher reinforcements. In a similar way, others have urged that interpersonal qualities (Frank, 1979) and relationships (Morse, 1979) are more important variables than the technique one uses to influence an individual's social or emotional adjustment. Relatedly, in a review of reports concerning skills needed by teachers of the emotionally disturbed, it was concluded that tolerance for anxiety and violence (GAC #22), as well as personal qualities of energy and enthusiasm (GAC #28) were most important qualifications (Herr, 1974).

The significance of relationship variables to the process of instruction has also been established through research. An extensive number of studies concerning teacher-student relationships identified a range of ways that teacher expectations (GAC #3) can influence the learning achievement and behavior of different students (Brophy & Good, 1974). In a related way, it was found in another study that failing to curb the social rejection of handicapped students may lead to a range of other problems (Leyser & Gottleib, 1980).

Though individual teachers can be seen to vary widely in the way they relate to students, there appear to be a number of strategies that can be developed through training (Matarazzo, 1978). It is important to understand in this regard that affective messages are communicated verbally, nonverbally, and through verbal intonations (Izard, 1977). Verbalizations, facial expressions, and body language are three predominant ways that individuals communicate feelings, attitudes, and beliefs in ways that prove accepting versus rejection (i.e., GAC #1).

Brown (1975) described a range of considerations for teachers attempting to improve the classroom climate for learning. These stemmed from Roger's view that teachers need three basic qualities to create a sound learning environment: (a) realness or genuineness (GAC #16), (b) attitude of acceptance and trust (GAC #10), and (c) empathic and understanding (GAC #2). Similarly, affective teaching skills were reported elsewhere to fall in one of three general categories of functioning (Aspy & Roebuck, 1979) — empathy, congruence, and positive self-regard.

More recently, a construct model designed to examine affective teaching skills was reported to include four predominant modes by which a teacher

could express empathy to students (Morgan, 1979). These modes were listed as (a) management of instruction (GAC #3), (b) organization of environment (GAC #24), (c) responding to feelings and emotional well-being (GAC #2, 4), and (d) interpersonal qualities.

Instructional factors fond to impinge upon classroom climate have been reported in two major research efforts (Moos, 1979; Solomon & Kendall, 1979). The major dimensions of classroom climate identified by Moos (1979) include relationship, management, and instruction. Also, two recent studies of student relationships described the beneficial influence of "cooperative goal-structuring" during some learning activities. In one, the interaction between handicapped and nonhandicapped students became more encouraging, supportive, and reinforcing as a result of this reinforcement procedure (Johnson et al., 1979). Similarly, there was an increase of positive interactions and interpersonal attraction between nonhandicapped and Down syndrome students when this procedure was used (Rynders et al., 1980).

In summary, the GAC model identifies three subclusters of competencies a teacher will use to establish classroom climate, trust, and rapport. These are developing communicative relationships, enhancing efficacy, or self-esteem, and promoting relevance, reward, and motivation to learn.

Managing Conflicts and Crises

The management of behavior in classrooms or instructional settings has been a concern for educators at all levels, though possibly of greatest concern in secondary schools (Gott et al., 1978). Two different subclusters of conflict management strategies are reflected in the GAC model. On one hand, there are proactive or preventative types of competencies best suited for "nipping conflicts in the bud." Secondly, there are competencies which seem necessary for responding effectively to unacceptable behavior. These address the goals of deescalating and/or exploiting conflict situations.

There are many ways one might respond to an adolescent's provocative, irresponsible, or maladaptive behaviors. Sometimes a response is the result of a mood; an attitude toward the student; a sense of threat, danger or loss of control; or a sense of nurturance towards another individual or group being effected by the identified problem student (Pattavina, 1980). These all reflect decisions about management which were prompted by an affective factor of the teacher.

Responses are sometimes based on theoretical or competency-based training. Management decisions in these instances can be stimulated predominantly by beliefs about the effectiveness or appropriateness of specific techniques or strategies. Teachers trained according to principles of operant conditioning, for example, might respond to classroom conflict differently from teachers trained to use psychodynamic procedures. In a recent study, regular and special education teachers were found to have significantly different preferences for strategies when responding to conflicts (Pattavina, 1982a).

Teachers have a limited number of options when one or more students are exhibiting inappropriate behavior. Long and Newman (1976) list these options as ignore, tolerate, prevent, and interfere. More specific strategies and techniques described in the professional literature include a range of surface management strategies (Long & Newman, 1976) and interaction styles, or control clusters (Fink et al., 1976).

Once the decision has been made (consciously or unconsciously) to inter-

fere with ongoing misbehavior, the teacher's response(s) is likely to have a critical influence on further developments of the conflict situation. For this reason, the GAC model addresses the area of conflict management from a learning standpoint (GAC #15); and as an interactional, or transactional, process between the teacher and student(s). Ideally, a teacher's use of the different management strategies will vary in accordance with the developmental needs of individual students.

Directive strategies, for example, are used to exert an immediate influence on behavior. Such strategies (e.g., token reinforcement) may be highly appropriate for some students but not for others. Students who chronically exhibit severe behavior problems are more likely to benefit from directive rather than nondirective strategies (Balthazar & Stevens, 1975; Thomas, 1978). Sooner or later, however, such students should be handled with less directive strategies (e.g., GAC #25) in order to develop greater degrees of self-control.

It may be relatively easy to respond to conflict with anger or a desire to punish. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the problem existing between the teacher and student has optional ways of being resolved (GAC #14). It is the *problem* that needs to be the focal concern, not the reactive feelings of either student or teacher. In fact, reactive or impulsive feelings tend to inhibit the ability to think clearly or reason logically (Bruner, Goodnow, & Austin, 1956). Thus, by controlling impulsive reactions, the teacher has the opportunity to consider other response options (GAC #17). If we as educators expect students to control their impulsive behaviors, then we need to demonstrate such control ourselves (i.e., GACs #17, 20, 22).

Some management responses are intended only to accommodate a student, or help that student to get through a difficult situation. Students experiencing some type of emotional or social crisis, for example, may need to be situationally or immediately supported in order to complete a current activity or task. Similarly, when two students get into a fight, the conflict needs to be curtailed; reasoning and perceptions need to be clarified; and feelings need to be somehow resolved before the learning task or activity can be resumed and completed. These might also be seen as comparable to strategies described as "emotional first-aid on the spot" (Redl & Wineman, 1952).

Other responses and strategies are oriented towards a specific affective learning need exhibited by a student. Youths who exhibit chronic types of adjustment problems, for example, may be able to profit from an ensuing conflict situation by way a teacher's responses at that point in time (i.e., GAC #15). There may be no better time to teach a student accountability than at a time when the student is engaged in nonaccountability. Likewise, a student's values can be clarified during situations where optional choices can be made, each resulting in different consequences (GAC #30, 41). Such intervention practices might also be described as "clinical exploitation of life events" (Redl & Wineman, 1952).

Management responses will also differ in terms of which realm of student functioning is being addressed, and the degree to which affect is a consideration (Prawat, 1980). After observing irresponsible behavior, a teacher may determine that a student needs to feel better (GAC #2, 10) about himself/herself and act accordingly. A different teacher's perception might be that the student needs help with self-control, and thus might devise an appropriate intervention strategy (GAC #20). Still another interpretation of the behavior might be that the student needs instructional assistance, and consequently, the teacher tries to help the student achieve more successfully (GAC #3).

Each of these decisions about student needs will result in a different type of teacher behavior or intervention strategy.

In summary, the GAC model proposes that conflict management is best understood as a process of interpersonal behaviors. Because individual youths may respond differently to interventions, it seems important that strategies are based upon developmental assessments. In this way, it will be more likely that the respective goals of the teacher and student(s) will be effectively communicated. Such communication may be fostered best through reflective, emphatic, and problem-solving orientations during the initial course of conflict management. Subsequently, however, the interaction needs to address options accountability, consequences, and purposeful decisions.

Using Positive Classroom Management Strategies

Positive classroom management strategies are suggested as ways of curbing the extent to which a student's affective difficulties interfere with learning. In addition, the proactive approaches identified in the GAC model are also likely to foster affective growth when practiced routinely.

Shavelson (1976) suggested that classroom management systems are the result of a decision-making process on the part of individual teachers. Relatedly, Gotts (1974) identified a range of classroom management decisions which special education teachers may need to address. These decisions concern (a) what to teach, (b) sequencing of objectives, (c) apropriate teaching methods, (d) materials, (e) behavior management, (f) organization of time, (g) student groupings, (h) physical organization of space, (i) how and what to evaluate, and (j) how to use resources.

In a similar way, Hewett and Forness (1977) identified critical teaching considerations in terms of three broad variables. These included the physical and affective environment, curriculum and instruction, and individual reward structure systems that stimulate and reinforce learning and adjustment.

While the GAC model is probably unable to address each of the classroom management concerns presented here in a comprehensive way, the competencies do focus directly upon the enlistment and maintenance of adaptive learning behaviors among students. As such, the model identifies the need for a classroom's structure (Dunkin & Biddle, 1974) to vary in accordance with individual student needs. The competencies identified in the GAC model seem broad enough to prove applicable across various classroom structures. Moreover, some of the competencies presented in the model assume a networking effect, whereby there competencies become implied.

For example, with the advent of IEPs for learning handicapped students, teachers need to deviate from traditional group instruction. It may, thereby, become important for a teacher to monitor several activities simultaneously (GAC #27). Relatedly, this kind of skill seems comparable to the trait of 'withitness," suggested to allow potential problems to be "nipped in the bud" (Kounin & Obradovic, 1976). In a networking fashion, one would also need to be adept at grouping (GAC #24), material selection and preparation, monitoring and feedback, and assessment of individual needs (GAC #3).

Managing transitions from one activity to another has proved to be a concern for teachers at all grade levels, since the process of changing activities can precipitate a number of different social or emotional conflicts (Spivack & Swift, 1975). Many disturbed and maladjusted youth may have limited or distorted concepts of time (Reich, 1969); therefore, a teacher may need to establish routines, remind students prior to the end or beginning of new

activities, or inform them of the exact or approximate amount of time that activities will last. An affective goal of such strategies is to allow students a sense of predictability about scheduled events. Some students may also need to prepare themselves for situations they find stressful.

A major area of teacher decision making influencing the climate and the behavioral adjustment of students is the process of instruction (Thomas, 1978). An important way that teachers can enhance the supportiveness of the classroom climate is by fostering academic success (GAC #3) (Glasser, 1969). While it is impossible to establish a causative relationship between self-concept of esteem and academic success (Scheirer & Kraut, 1979), it will nonetheless be important for teachers to manage the amounts and kinds of stresses which handicapped students experience during learning activities. Academic failure has been associated with irresponsible behavior (Bower & Lambert, 1971) and lowered self-esteem (Thomas, 1978) in an extensive number of studies.

Teachers need to address the question of how individual students are best able to achieve different learning objectives (GAC #3). This may require modifications of curriculum content, controlling the type of degree of intellectual skills needed to perform a task, designing novel instructional materials, or varying the instructional strategies used to generate and sustain attention (GAC #4, 6). Issues of teaching concern in this regard include stimulus intensity (Zeaman & House, 1963), linguistic complexity (Cherkes, 1975), content relevance (Schafer & Polk, 1967), clarity (Klausmeier, Ghatala, & Frier, 1974), and satiation effects (Cofer & Apley, 1964). Relatedly, the format in which instruction is presented can influence subsequent cognitive activity, affective reactions, and social behavior (Bruner et al., 1956; Bruner, 1966; Cawley, Goodstein, & Burrow, 1972; Pattavina, 1973).

In some classrooms, a teacher is able to design learning activities addressed primarily to affective, or social-emotional objectives. Any number of different affective learning objectives may be deemed as necessary or beneficial for an individual or group of students (Berkovitz, 1978). Examples of affective instructional procedures and strategies reported in the literature include (a) teaching self-concept (Hamilton, Flemming, & Hicks, 1976; Howe & Howe, 1975); (b) improving social status (Leyser & Gottleib, 1980); (c) promoting group interaction and acceptance (Johnson et al., 1979; Rynders et al., 1980); (d) teaching ethical and altruistic concerns (Kobak, 1979); (e) enhancing accountability and self-regulation (Hoover, 1978; Thomas, 1978); (f) improving race relations (Slavin & Madden, 1979); (g) developing self-control (Fagan & Long, 1979; Goodwin & Mahoney, 1975; Pressley, 1979); and (h) developing moral reasoning (Muson, 1979).

In other instances, a teacher can focus on "enabling" affective objectives, thereby increasing the student's chances of succeeding academically, and receiving positive reinforcement for adaptive behavior (Hops & Cobb, 1972). It is the student's developmental level which determines what the affective objectives will need to be like.

Other competencies included under positive classroom management practices concern the ongoing or systematic management of student behavior. Again, some of the skills identified in this competency cluster are also appropriate for both managing conflicts and establishing climate. Teachers are advised, for example, to express enthusiasm about activities during the course of instruction (GAC #28) in order to enhance student motivation or interest. Some of the reasons for inhibited student motivation may include the time of day, the nature of activity, or prior events. At times like these, a

teacher's expression of feelings can affect student behavior in critical ways. If a teacher expresses apathy or tedium, as opposed to enthusiasm, student behavior may likely follow the principles of contagion (Redl & Wineman, 1952).

Reminding students of previous successes (GAC #31) can help to activate participation. For the sake of motivation and self-esteem, it will be important that learnig handicapped students maintain awareness of capabilities and strengths. When faced with new or difficult situations and learning activities, some students may find it more comfortable to "lay down and play dead." Students will need to be coached and supported during these kinds of experiences. For example, "Remember how well you did (named activity)?"

At other times, when a teacher senses tension with an individual or group of students, it may sometimes be helpful to lighten the mood (GAC #32). Tension and stress are associated with anxiety, and learning hinges critically on the amount of anxiety being experienced. Laughter and humor have a way of relieving tension in individuals, and can change the course of what otherwise might be a disruptive situation.

Many behaviors can be managed through proximity and nonverbal feedback (GAC #33). In fact, it is totally unnecessary for every misbehavior and emergent act of defiance to be verbally proclaimed in public (GAC #29). Often, situations can be controlled by the way you look at a student, or by standing next to an individual or group. This does not require the teacher to interrupt instruction and does not force other students to stop what they are doing to attend to the misbehavior. Fink et al. (1976) described this as a *neutral facilitator* strategy.

To summarize, effective classroom management practices can be seen to involve a range of interrelated teaching competencies, all of which are needed for establishing a learning environment that is responsive to the needs of individual students. Three major clusters of responsibility will include variables of the physical and affective environment, curriculum and instruction, and individual reward-structure systems that stimulate and reinforce learning and adjustment (Hewett & Forness, 1977). As the learning needs of students become more diverse or extensive, there will be a need for greater control of these classroom management variables. In other words, the instructional process may need to become more structured or directive in relation to the severity of an individual student's affective learning difficulties.

SUMMARY

Secondary level students who exhibit social or emotional adjustment difficulties can prove taxing to teachers in either regular or special class settings. Teachers need a range of competencies in order for learning handicapped students to be able to achieve and adapt successfully. *Specialized* teaching competencies have been reported for persons working with specific populations of students. Presumably, there are special competencies needed for teaching students who are ED, that differ from those competencies needed for teaching students who are LD, MR, physically handicapped, etc. This notion has also been reflected in teacher training programs and certification standards.

The recent movement in some states towards generic teaching certificates is based partly on the assumption that different learning handicaps are frequently overlapping. It's not uncommon to find that some ED students will also exhibit specific learning disabilities and vice versa. The same is true for individuals who are MR or physically handicapped.

A set of interrelated teaching behaviors, described as *generic affective competencies* are described in this report as having importance for meeting the affective learning needs of handicapped adolescents. The GAC model incorporates three major clusters of teaching competencies: (a) establishing climate, trust and rapport, (b) managing conflicts and crises, and (c) using positive classroom management practices.

The generic affective competencies are an outgrowth of observed teaching behavior, theoretical considerations, and consensual validation research. In formulating the list of statements, the authors drew from psychodynamic, developmental, and behavioral theories of learning. The skills in part assume a broad conceptual basis in mediational learning theory, as opposed to simple associative or reinforcement theory. As such, children and adolescents are viewed as mediating individuals who are continually acting and reacting, not only to external events round them, but also to internal phenomena and information processing capacities that develop with age, exposure, and teaching in a systematically spiraling fashion.

The competency-based model of teaching presented in this report is significant to the extent that corroborative findings are able to be generated through empirical study. Subsequent research activities being conducted or designed need to ultimately achieve validation of the competencies over time and setting variables. Broad questions remaining problematic concern the value of the competencies for promoting child change, and the extent to which these affective competencies can be developed by individual teachers through (pre- or in-service) training.

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